

THE MAGAZINE FOR AAA MEMBERS

2019  
TRAVEL  
ISSUE

# journey

## puget sound

January/February 2019



TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE NEW YEAR

OUR FAVORITE PACIFIC NORTHWEST PLACES • BOSTON'S CHARMS  
CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN SPAIN, PORTUGAL AND MOROCCO



BOSTONIANS HAVE BEEN  
GATHERING AT FANEUIL HALL  
(LOWER RIGHT) SINCE 1742.



3 DAYS IN

# BOSTON

THE HISTORIC THRIVES ALONGSIDE THE HIP IN THIS REVERED CITY

I'M EAVESDROPPING on two women in Colonial garb as they fervently discuss the impending Revolutionary War. One is convinced the Colonies can no longer tolerate the unfair taxes being imposed by England. Her friend believes that remaining under British rule is far safer than going to war. Their conversation draws me in like no history class ever did. Both arguments, as well as their palpable fears, are compelling. Just as I'm wondering what I would have done in their situation . . . poof! They disappear before my eyes. They're holograms! 📺 At The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, cutting-edge technology transforms the there-and-then into a stirring here-and-now. Similarly, all over Boston, the city's exciting present is reinvigorating its legendary past, and its ability to marry the historic and the hip is one of the most beguiling aspects of this nearly four-century-old city.

THIS PAGE: SEAN PAYONE. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO; COURTESY OF THE OMNI PARKER HOUSE; STEVE TULLEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



## MUSEUMS GONE MODERN

### DAY 1

Who knew I'd find the perfect item for my holiday wish list this morning? I've set aside the day for some museum hopping—which, in Boston, means visiting lively places without the slightest stodginess. At the Museum of Science, set atop a dam-bridge in the middle of the Charles River, visitors are eagerly interacting with a multitude of hands-on exhibits. In a gallery showcasing impressive technologies developed locally, they gyrate before a special-effects “particle mirror” and tap computers to learn how scientists create robotic bees that fly. Amid a display of upgraded everyday objects, I discover just what I want from Santa: an umbrella with lights that pulse when rain is imminent, alerting its owner to bring it along.

Only a couple of miles across the city's compact downtown lies the Seaport district, where new high-rise offices and condos are rapidly resuscitating a once-languishing waterfront. At its heart is the striking Institute of Contemporary Art, filled with multimedia installations and docents who are eager to discuss the works with visitors.

Back downtown, the highlight of lunch at the Omni Parker House hotel

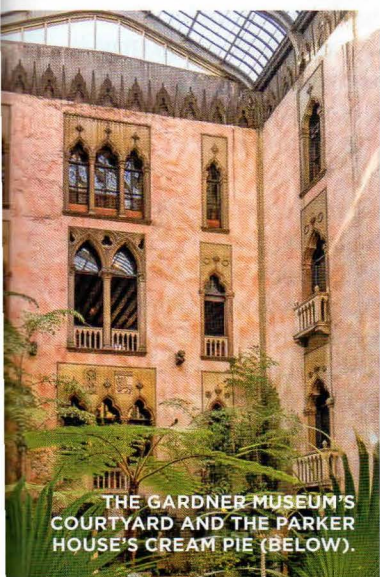
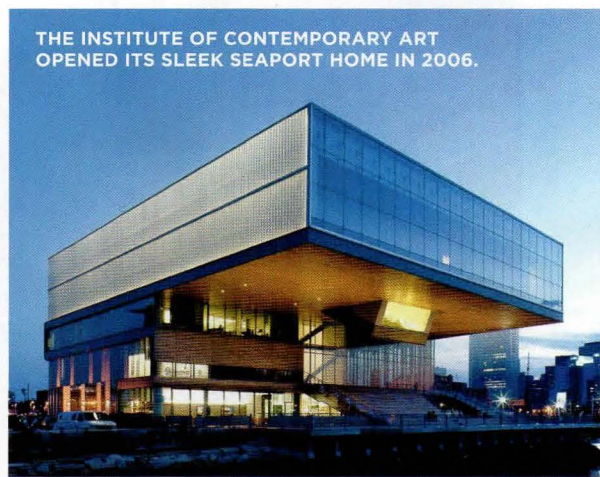
is a dessert that's so famous it could be in a museum itself. In the late 1860s, Boston cream pie was invented right here. The present-day version features a petite, custard-filled sponge cake, cloaked in chocolate ganache and toasted almonds and garnished with strawberries and crème anglaise, a delectable melding of yesterday and today.

Four blocks away at the Park Street station, I catch the subway to the Fenway area, where the arts flourish alongside Red Sox baseball. At the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, which opened in 1903, I'm enthralled by an exquisitely replicated Venetian palazzo. Built by Mrs. Gardner, its interior courtyard is framed by rooms bejeweled with her breathtaking art collection. The palace remained unchanged for decades following Mrs. Gardner's death in 1924, until a glass addition in 2012 brought in a vertical, in-the-round theater. Gardner, who embraced the avant-garde, surely would applaud the rock concerts as enthusiastically as the classical performances.

It's a pleasant stroll to the revered Museum of Fine Arts, where the collection spans ancient times to the modern era. The doors are open late on this spring evening, and the halls are ringing with visitors enjoying not just engaging exhibits, but also gallery talks, drawing classes and a big-screen movie on the lawn.

Things are jumping at Tiger Mama, a trendsetter in Fenway's hot restaurant scene. The spirited, tropical vibe makes me smile as I peruse the Southeast Asian-inspired menu created by chef-owner and *Top Chef* runner-up Tiffani Faison. Soon, I'm purring over Tiger Mama's signature chili-seared short rib crudo and a big bowl of Singapore street noodles. Boston sure has come a long way since the days of baked beans and Yankee pot roast.

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART OPENED ITS SLEEK SEAPORT HOME IN 2006.



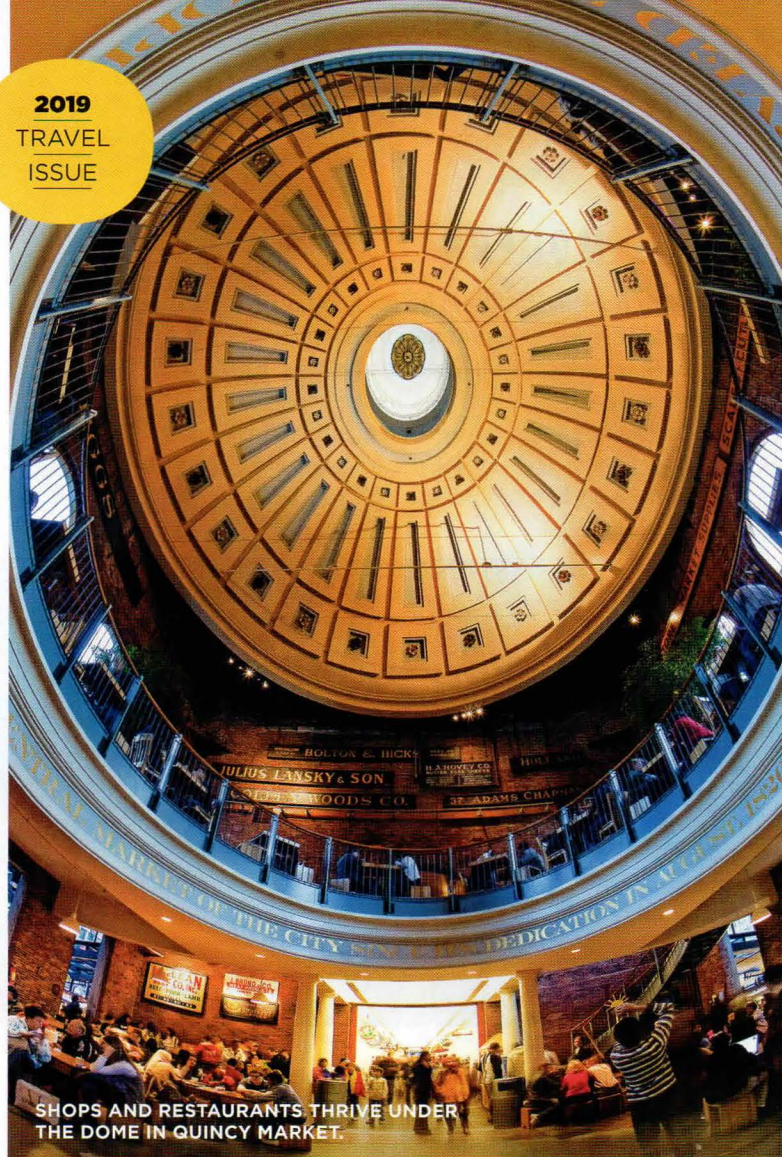
THE GARDNER MUSEUM'S COURTYARD AND THE PARKER HOUSE'S CREAM PIE (BELOW).



BY MIMI BIGELOW STEADMAN







SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS THRIVE UNDER THE DOME IN QUINCY MARKET.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY

### DAY 2

I know it's unpatriotic, but I admit I'm feeling a little guilty about all the tea that went overboard during the Boston Tea Party. Having arrived at The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum on the Fort Point Channel 20 minutes before the next tour, I've popped into Abigail's Tea Room for a tasting of five tea varieties that were destroyed on that fateful evening in December 1773. They are delicious, and it seems so wasteful. My thoughts quickly change, however, when at the appointed time, I join others in a re-created meetinghouse, where a Samuel Adams re-enactor stirs up the audience.

After many "huzzahs!" we board one of two replica ships and "dump" tea crates (they're tied to ropes and hauled back aboard). It's fun, and kids in the group love it, but we're learning important history, too. After encountering the holographic Colonists, we're enveloped in a multi-sensory film that transports us into the Battles

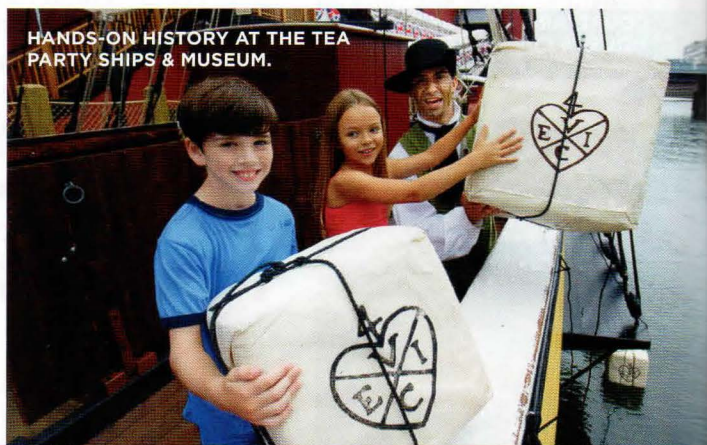
of Lexington and Concord. By the end, I have a renewed respect for our founders' courage and sacrifice.

Walking the Freedom Trail—a mostly red line on the sidewalk connecting 16 major historic sites—I arrive at Faneuil Hall, a handsome brick edifice dubbed the "Cradle of Liberty," because it housed pivotal meetings for the early patriots. A few steps away, I pause to watch acrobatic street performers before entering Quincy Market's long, crowded corridor of take-out food stands. It stirs my appetite and quickens my pace to Union Oyster House, established in 1826 and touted as America's oldest continuously operating restaurant. Beside the 193-year-old raw bar, I climb the stairs to a low-beamed dining room and indulge in creamy clam chowder and an overstuffed lobster roll.

Afterward, I waddle across the park-like Greenway along the Freedom Trail to the North End to Paul Revere's diminutive house. Inside, I picture his family gathering around the dining table before retiring to cramped upstairs rooms. Of course, Revere didn't sleep the night of April 18–19, 1775. Looking up at the Old North Church's steeple nearby, I imagine two glowing signal lanterns and the start of his midnight ride.

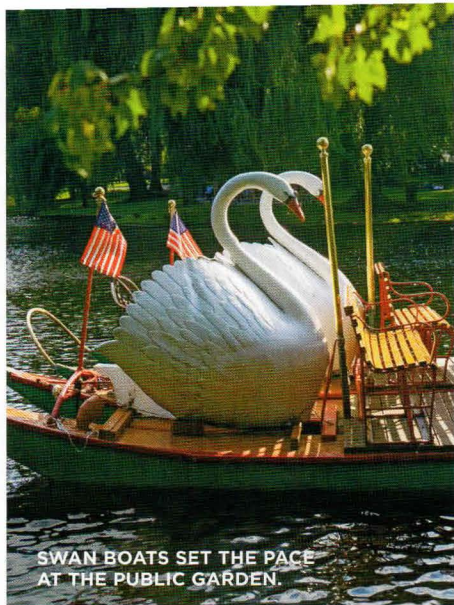
Might Revere have sipped drinking chocolate to stay awake? At Captain Jackson's Historic Chocolate shop, next to the church, costumed interpreters grate cacao to make the strong, dark liquid while explaining that, in Revere's day, drinking chocolate was a popular pick-me-up.

In the early 1900s, Italian immigrants moved into the North End, and bustling *ristorantes* and trattorias still flavor Hanover Street. At a casual spot called Quattro, I slalom among crowded tables to a stool at the counter, where I order a pizza and watch as it's shaped, topped with mozzarella, tomatoes and arugula, and slid into the wood-fired oven. It's sublime, and even though I can't finish it, I still join the line just up the street at Mike's Pastry shop, where a crackly cannoli oozing fresh ricotta proves well worth the wait.



HANDS-ON HISTORY AT THE TEA PARTY SHIPS & MUSEUM.





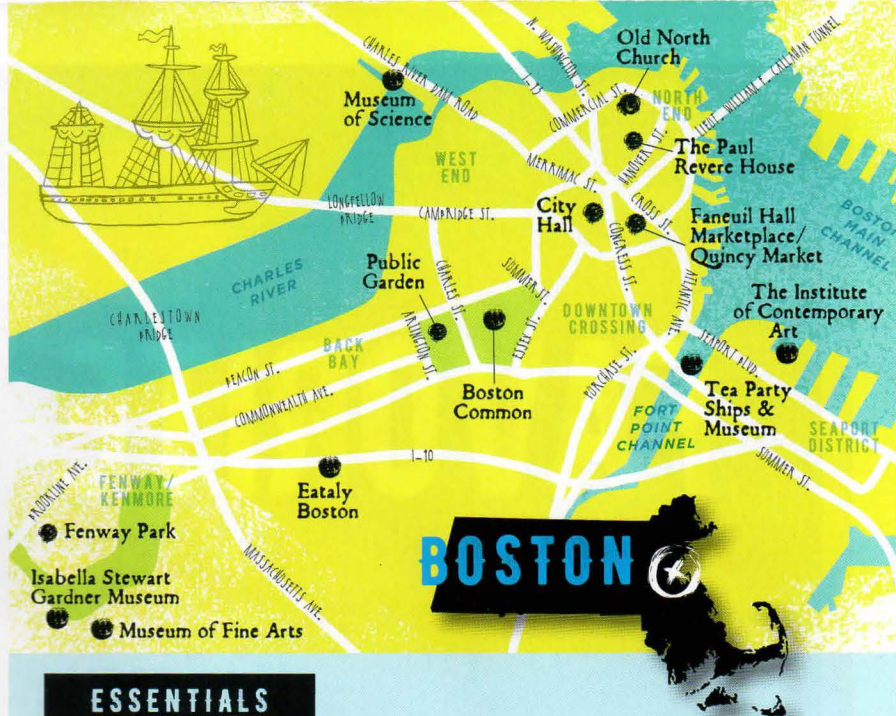
SWAN BOATS SET THE PACE AT THE PUBLIC GARDEN.

## THE FUTURE IS NOW

### DAY 3

*Buongiorno* from Italy! Actually, it's Eataly, one of six U.S. locations of the much-touted Italian food emporium. Its idealized "market square" provides quite a contrast to the North End's quaint old grocery shops and *salumerias*, but it's no less appealing. Sipping a cappuccino, I wander among shelves and counters laden with foods imported from Italy or sourced locally, with several tasty offerings prepared on-site. Beside footstool-sized wheels of Parmigiano Reggiano stacked below suspended legs of prosciutto, a woman is stirring fresh mozzarella curds in hot water, stretching the cheese with a wooden paddle, and shaping it into balls. I wish I had a way to take some home!

A block away on Newbury Street, I slowly window-shop past its many fine-art galleries and exclusive designer boutiques. The fashionable avenue leads to the lush Public Garden, where I join families boarding one of the charming Swan Boats that have graced the small lagoon since 1877. Thirty feet long, the narrow pontoon boat carries rows of benches and a giant fiberglass swan at the



### ESSENTIALS

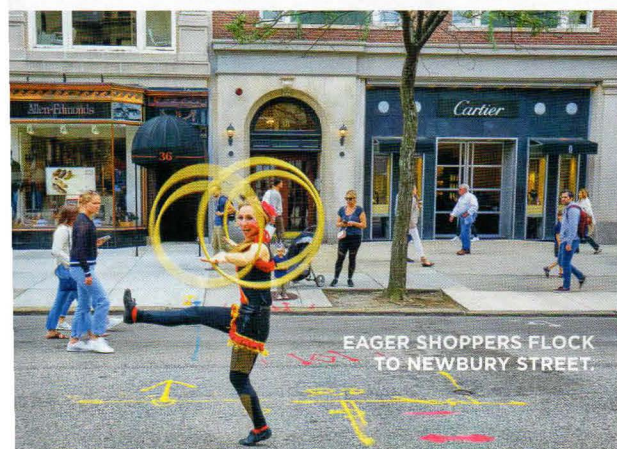
Boston's Logan International Airport is a short ride from downtown via taxi, ride-hailing service or MBTA subway ("the T"). The historic district offers a variety of lodging options. Favorites include the sleekly appointed AAA Four Diamond Kimpton Nine Zero Hotel, where in-room furnishings include Eames chairs, and the elegant Omni Parker House, where Charles Dickens once stayed. Call or visit your nearest AAA store for more on flights, lodging and dining. Or visit [AAA.com](http://AAA.com) to start planning now.

back enclosing a young man who's pedaling us along on the 15-minute ride. As we glide under a Victorian footbridge, I spy mallards dabbling in the water and the resident pair of real swans canoodling on the shore.

Reluctantly leaving the serene oasis, I cross the street to Boston Common, where tourists and office workers are scarfing down food-truck lunches and lounging in the grass. When I see a bearded fellow sitting at a table with a manual typewriter and a sign saying, "Poet for Hire," I can't resist. He introduces himself as Stan Vilensky, and when I ask for something about Boston, he immediately starts pecking away. Five minutes later, he hands me his newly minted poem, which ends "I hear the bell, untolled and still; it sweeps from mind the old in this new city on a hill."

The "new city" is thriving at Spyce, a busy nearby eatery employing high-tech automation. Unique to Boston, it's received a clamor of curiosity and attention since opening in spring 2018. The mesmerizing process—brainchild of recent Massachusetts Institute of Technology grads—features computer-driven arms dumping veggies and grains into spinning woks where they tumble like clothes in a dryer. Sitting down to my robotically prepared Moroccan bowl (spiced freekeh, chickpeas, kale, currants, olives, pumpkin seeds, mint and more), I realize the Freedom Trail passes by just outside the door. There it is again, I muse as I munch: that marvelous collision of past and present in this special city that is so wonderfully old—and new. ①

*Frequent Journey contributor MIMI BIGELOW STEADMAN often travels to Boston from her home in coastal Maine.*



EAGER SHOPPERS FLOCK TO NEWBURY STREET.